

Hobbies

Proof of inflation is found at the U.S. Mint

By Roger Boye

Inflation finally has caught up with the U.S. proof set, one of the world's most widely sold coin collectibles.

On July 1, the United States Mint will hike the price to \$12.50 because of rising production costs. Officials have charged \$11 for the five-coin set since 1982.

In the past decade, Uncle Sam has sold an average of three million sets a year, each containing a proof version of the five circulating coins, cent through half dollar. Proofs are made with polished dies and slugs, and each coin is struck at least twice to produce a mirror-like finish.

Order forms for 1992 proof sets are available by writing to the Customer Service Center, United States Mint, 10001 Aeros-

pace Drive, Lanham, Md. 20706, or by calling (301) 436-7400. The \$11 price is good on orders postmarked before July 1.



One of the most unusual U.S. gold coins ever made—a \$4 "stella" of 1880—sold for \$264,000 in a California auction late last month.

The government minted experimental "stellas" in 1879 and 1880, some showing Miss Liberty with "coiled hair" and others with "flowing hair." The 1880 "coiled hair" coin that sold in February is one of about 10 known.

In all, collectors paid \$3.8 million for 209 gold coins, an average of about \$18,500 per item. The auction by Superior Galleries of Beverly Hills was the first of a two-part sale of a collection formed by California collector

Edward Trompeter.

The second part this fall likely will garner \$20 million or more in winning bids as even rarer \$10 and \$20 gold pieces go on the block.



The nation's largest organization of coin collectors will conduct its 1994 convention in Detroit. Governors of the American Numismatic Association have voted 8-1 to reaffirm their decision to meet in the Motor City, and ANA staff is "moving ahead with [signing] contracts for the convention," said ANA spokesman Stephen Bobbitt.

J.H. Cline, a Florida coin dealer, had obtained signatures of 336 coin dealers who said they would not attend the Detroit convention, Bobbitt said. For several months, Cline has been ask-

ing the ANA to move its 1994 "World's Fair of Money" to another city.



Hobby pros will be out in force March 29, as three Chicago-area clubs conduct their annual shows.

About 20 dealers will attend the Schaumburg Numismatic Society show at the Marriott Schaumburg, 50 N. Martingale Road. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Another 22 dealers will sell their wares from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lake County Coin Club show at the Moose Lodge, 2755 Washington St. in Waukegan.

Twenty-five other dealers will do business from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Will County Coin Club show at the Holiday Inn near the intersection of Interstate 80 and Larkin Avenue in Joliet.